

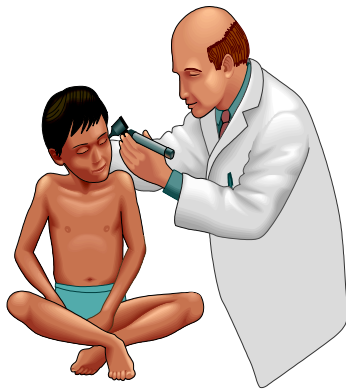
Community Health Plan

Childhood Infections and Antibiotics

The following information will help you understand why the doctor may not prescribe antibiotics every time your child has fever, diarrhea, or an ear infection.

Viral infections

- ' Viruses are small germs that can cause infections.
- ' Some examples of viral infections are:
 - g Common colds
 - g Croup
 - g Flu
 - g Stomach flu (gastroenteritis) with vomiting and diarrhea
 - g Ear infection (also caused by bacteria)
- ' Antibiotics **do not** work against viruses.
- ' The child recovers from the viral infection when the illness ends its cycle (from five to eight days).



Symptoms of viral infections include:

- ' Sore throat
- ' Runny nose
- ' Headaches
- ' Muscle aches

Bacterial infections

- ' The most common bacterial infections are ear infection and sore throat (strep throat).
- ' Other bacterial infections include bronchitis, sinusitis, and pneumonia.
- ' Antibiotics can help to fight bacterial infections.

Symptoms of a bacterial infection include:

- ' Fever of 104 degreesEF
- ' Persistent fever
- ' Shortness of breath
- ' Yellow/green mucus



Remember:

- ' Antibiotics are prescribed medications that kill bacteria. They **do not** kill viruses.
- ' Antibiotics **will not** cure the common cold, flu or any other viral infection.
- ' How do you know if your child has a viral or bacterial infection? Ask your child's doctor.
- ' Your child's doctor will determine whether your child needs antibiotics or not based on the type of infection.
- ' If your child has a viral infection, the doctor **may not** recommend antibiotics.

This newsletter should not be considered specific medical advice, as each circumstance is different. If you need medical advice, talk to your doctor and do not rely on knowledge gained from this information. Community Health Plan/Health Education and Promotion Unit, 1999.

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